

Appl. No. 10/713,780
Amdt. dated February 15, 2005
Reply to Office action of November 16, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A shaft coupling element comprising:
a first portion configured for connection to a shaft and a second portion configured for connection to a secondary component;
the first portion comprises first and second spaced apart side walls with a partial cylindrical portion extending therebetween to define a shaft receiving slot having an axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving slot;
a through bore extending through the first and second walls; and
a safety notch extending through the partial cylindrical portion adjacent the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving slot to define a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the cylindrical portion.
2. (Currently amended) The shaft coupling element of claim 1 wherein the through bore is at an axial distance (B) from the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving opening and the safety notch has an axial length S that is larger than the distance (B).
3. (Currently amended) The shaft coupling element of claim 1 wherein the through bore is at an axial distance (B) from the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving opening, the safety notch has an axial length (S), and the shaft has a forward chamfer having an axial length (C), wherein the safety notch axial length (S) in combination with the chamfer axial length (C) is larger than the distance (B).
4. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 1 wherein the shaft receiving slot has a circular configuration.

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5. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 1 wherein the shaft receiving slot has a u-shaped configuration.

6. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 1 wherein the second portion includes a yoke having spaced apart arms with a securement bore extending therethrough.

7. (Currently amended) A shaft coupling element comprising:
a first portion configured for connection to a shaft and a second portion configured for connection to a secondary component;
the first portion comprises a body having a shaft receiving slot therein;
an axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving slot; and
a safety notch extending through the first portion body adjacent the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving slot to define a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the first portion body.

8. (Currently amended) The shaft coupling element of claim 7 wherein a through bore extends through the first portion body, the through bore is at an axial distance (B) from the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving opening and the safety notch has an axial length (S) that is larger than the distance (B).

9. (Currently amended) The shaft coupling element of claim 7 wherein a through bore extends through the first portion body, the through bore is at an axial distance (B) from the axial opening ~~in to~~ into the shaft receiving opening, the safety notch has an axial length (S), and the shaft has a forward chamfer having an axial length (C), wherein the safety notch axial length (S) in combination with the chamfer axial length (C) is larger than the distance (B).

10. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 7 wherein the shaft receiving slot has a circular configuration.

11. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 7 wherein the shaft receiving slot has a u-shaped configuration.

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12. (Original) The shaft coupling element of claim 7 wherein the second portion includes a yoke having spaced apart arms with a securement bore extending therethrough.

13. (Currently amended) A method of forming a shaft coupling element, the method including the steps of:

providing a blank having an axis extending along a first portion and a second portion with a rear edge extending along the first portion substantially perpendicular to the axis;

providing a first through bore through the first portion on a first side of the axis and spaced from the rear edge;

providing a second through bore through the first portion on a second, opposite side of the axis and spaced from the rear edge;

providing a notch through the first portion, the notch extending from the rear edge; and

wrapping the blank about the axis such that a shaft receiving slot is defined by the first portion with the notch defining a radial opening from the shaft receiving slot through the first portion.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein upon wrapping of the blank, the first and second through bores align.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the first and second through bores are each at a distance of less than (B) from the rear edge, and the notch extends axially from the rear edge ~~in to~~ into the first portion a distance (S) that is larger than the distance (B).

16. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of defining a pair of yoke arms in the second portion.